ESSA State Plan Stakeholders Meeting Summary
October 24, 2016/ 10:00AM – 4:00PM
Great Northern Hotel, Helena

Adjusted Timeline:

Original Date	Proposed Date
Post plan for public comment: November 9	November 14
Public comment period closed: December 10	December 13
Submit plan: December 20	December 23

Next meeting: November 10, 2016, Helena 9 am to 4 pm

Accountability improvement models: Two new options that allow students to be tracked by cohort:

- Z-score gain method
    - How many standard deviations away from the mean a student or school is. The mean would be for the state by grade level, with different ranges for each grade.
    - Pros: You can follow all the students at a school and then come up with an average for that school. It can be used to compare different assessment methods. The numbers are also easy to explain to parents and members of the community.
    - Cons: For an improvement score, some schools will have a negative number.
- Student growth percentile method
    - Creates a peer group out of students who score similarly within a grade, and then follows them as a group for a year to see how a student compares to others in his or her peer group and calculate a growth rate from that. A growth rate higher than 50% is improvement, a growth rate lower than 50% is a decline. Each student would be regrouped each year into a new peer group.
    - Pros: it can be used across different assessment methods. It also does not use negative numbers, meaning a school will never have a negative improvement rate.
    - Cons: the lack of negative numbers makes it harder to explain to parents. For really high or low scoring students, there may not be enough similarly scoring students to make a peer group.

Stakeholder consensus: The z-score method seems easier for schools to use and to explain to teachers and parents.

Supporting all educators: To support educators and ensure student learning, well-being, and success, we need to:

- Develop, retain, and advance educators
    - Create systems to support educators throughout career
- Support quality and effectiveness of both teachers and administrators
    - A three-pronged approach: (1) Rigorous content standards system; (2) Educators empowered in leadership; (3) Access to high quality professional development
- Enhance educators' skills to address specific learning needs
    - Employ a system with three individualized strategic levels: (1) Comprehensive support, (2) targeted support, and (3) support for all
    - Use multi-tier systems of support to coordinate programs addressing different needs
- Expand partnerships to ensure all students have equitable access to effective educators

- Focus on low-income and minority students

Discussion: The stakeholders were asked to consider (1) ways Montana could support educators, (2) ways to ensure schools implement a culture of perpetual growth, and (3) ways to expand partnerships to ensure all students have equitable access to good educators. For each question, the stakeholders were asked to consider what should be emphasized, what was missing, and innovative ideas that could be used to achieve those goals.

Consensus: Teachers need more professional development, especially kinds that do not take them out of the classroom. They need more training on issues like mental health and trauma-informed teaching. Teachers also need more teacher training pathways for students who want to become teachers. They need more access to technology to use in their classrooms and for professional development. There needs to be more options for teachers to personalize instruction. To create a climate of perpetual growth, schools need to make that a part of their overall mindset. Teachers need to be culturally knowledgeable and responsive to their students' differing needs. They also need training on how to better recognize barriers to learning.

<u>Supporting all students:</u> The purpose of this section of ESSA is to (1) Ensure that every student has access to a well-rounded education, (2) Improve school conditions for learning, and (3) Improve use of technology to improve academic achievement and digital literacy. Emphasize the importance of supporting every student, especially students from historically low-achieving groups.
Important to remember:
- These sub-groups of students (i.e. disabled, racial minority, low-income, etc.) are not distinct— they often overlap.
- Incorporate the concept of universal design into learning to minimize educational
- Schools, districts and educational agencies should use a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework to make data-based decisions to ensure that schools and agencies are supporting the most students and schools possible while reducing overlap and parallel work.

Discussion: Stakeholders were asked to consider: what makes well-rounded education, how to have safe and healthy students, how to use family and community engagement to improve education, school transitions and graduation rates, school climate, effective use of technology in schools, how to provide equitable access for every student, and school mental health.

Consensus: There needs to be more school climate measures and mental health programs in schools. Teachers especially need more training on mental health and suicide prevention as well as brain-based learning techniques. Teachers need to be culturally responsive (Indian Education for All is a good start). There needs to be more emphasis on the arts and technology in schools (for technology, Digital Academy and the Learning Hub are good examples). There also needs to be more of an emphasis on physical education for elementary schools and better nutrition for all schools. There should be more options for alternative or personalized learning for students. There needs to be more orientations for transition grades to help students settle into their new schools. Teachers and school staff need to have greater knowledge of what programs are available to help their students.